

DTROT-065: FLASH-Ambassador Bridge Reopening

FLASH REPORT: On February 14, 2022, the Ambassador Bridge reopened to traffic after a nearly 7-day closure brought about by a group of protesters at the foot of the bridge in Windsor. Upon reopening **Michigan Governor Whitmer** issued a press release (attached), her third on the matter.

During the closure DTROT/HOM Comartin, and WSHDC/D-HoM Loken, and WSHDC/CIAS & GR-PS engaged key political stakeholders including U.S. **Representatives Kildee (D-MI-5), Lawrence (D-MI-14), and Dingell (D-MI-12); Senator Peters (D-MI), staff of Senator Brown (D-OH); the Michigan Governor's office;** and industry leaders throughout the week. Both relayed messaging regarding Canada's steps to resolve the situation. The blockade at the border generated significant local and national media coverage and inquiries.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- DTROT territory interlocutors uniformly expressed support for Canadian democratic principles of the right to associate and freedom of speech. However, their main message was an urgent economic need to reopen the border. Several officials and industry groups issued press releases and social media posts to express this goal; some called for bringing manufacturing "back" to the United States.
- Many of DTROT's interlocutors expressed deep concern about an apparent lack of advance intelligence on current protest actions and seek to know more about how such actions can be anticipated and proactively prevented in the future.
- Officials shared their perceptions that a coordinated police response among levels of Canadian Government was lacking or too slow to develop.
- Stakeholders raised questions around the circumstances in which the use of Canadian and provincial emergency powers is appropriate.
- Broader concerns were expressed by some about the rising tide of populism and anti-government sentiment, along with questions on sources of funding for the actions in Canada.
- Media coverage in Michigan was extensive and continuous; local television aired helicopter coverage of the blockade, radio offered regular top-of-the-hour updates, and print media producing in-depth supply chain and business impacts and live-blog updates. Coverage in the rest of DTROT territory focused on local plant shutdowns related to the blockade.
- One outlet, *Crains Detroit*, [highlighted](#) how the blockade at the Ambassador Bridge reinforces the need for the second crossing in the Detroit-Windsor corridor, the **Gordie Howe International Bridge**.

NEXT STEPS:

DTROT will continue to coordinate with WSHDC and other departments to monitor development at the border and the ongoing reaction among U.S. stakeholders. WSHDC/HOM is scheduled to speak with Rep. Lawrence (D-MI-14), whose district includes the Ambassador Bridge, tomorrow.

COMMENT:

The reopening of the border is a critical step towards allaying the immediate concerns around supply chain disruption. Maintaining freight flow through the corridor will be essential to avoid further damage to Canada's image as a reliable trade partner. A strategy will need to be developed as to how communicate back to US elected officials and the business community that all levels of government in Canada are to ensure that these type of blockades at international borders will never occur again.

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